

Appendix A

How the Marines are Organized

Marines are organized as a “force-in-readiness” to support national needs. They are divided into four broad categories:

- ☐ Headquarters Marine Corps
- ☐ Operating Forces
- ☐ Reserves
- ☐ Supporting Establishment

Headquarters Marine Corps

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps consists of the Commandant of the Marine Corps and those staff agencies that advise and assist the Commandant in discharging those responsibilities prescribed by law and higher authority. The Commandant of the Marine Corps is directly responsible to the Secretary of the Navy for the administration, discipline, internal organization, training, requirements, efficiency, and readiness of the Marine Corps; the operation of the Marine Corps materiel support system; and the total performance of the Marine Corps.

Operating Forces

Operating forces, considered the heart of the Marine Corps, constitute the forward presence, crisis response, and fighting power available to the combatant commanders. Major elements include the Marine Forces Atlantic, Marine Forces Pacific, Marine Corps Security Forces, and the Marine Security Guard Battalion with its detachments at embassies and consulates around the globe. About 64 percent of all active duty Marines are assigned to these operating forces.

The “Forces for Unified Commands” Memorandum assigns Marine Corps operating forces to each of the combatant commands. Although there are five Marine Corps components, there are only two Marine Corps component commands. The Marine Corps has established two combatant command level service component commands: Marine Corps Forces Atlantic and Marine Corps Forces Pacific. The II Marine Expeditionary Force is provided by Commander, Marine Corps Forces Atlantic to the Commander-in-Chief,

U.S. Atlantic Command and the I and III Marine Expeditionary Forces are provided by Commander, Marine Corps Forces Pacific to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command. This assignment reflects the peacetime disposition of Marine Corps Forces (MARFORs). Marine expeditionary forces are apportioned to the remaining geographic combatant commands for contingency planning and are provided to the combatant commands when directed by the Secretary of Defense.

The Commander, Marine Corps Forces Atlantic is assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command and the Commander, Marine Corps Forces Pacific is assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command. In order to provide three star general officer representation to the remaining three geographic combatant commands, Commander, Marine Corps Forces Atlantic is the Marine Corps Component Commander to both Commander-in-Chief, U.S. European Command and Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command. The Commander, Marine Corps Forces Pacific is designated as the Marine Corps Component Commander to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command.

The Marine Corps Security Forces protect key Naval installations and facilities worldwide. Although not assigned to combatant commands, they are part of the operating forces of the Marine Corps. These Security Forces include Marine Barracks and Marine Security Forces Companies in the continental United States and abroad. Marine Corps Security Forces personnel operationally report to the Chief of Naval Operations. The Marine Security Guard Battalion provides forces to the Department of State for embassy security. Marine Security Guard personnel operationally report to the Secretary of State.

Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF)

The MAGTF (pronounced “mag-taff”) is the Marine Corps principle organization for the conduct of all missions across the range of military operations. The MAGTF provides a combatant commander-in-chief or other operational commanders with a versatile expeditionary force for responding to a broad range of crisis and conflict situations. MAGTFs are balanced, combined arms forces with organic command, ground, aviation, and sustainment elements.

MAGTF Capabilities

MAGTF capabilities are not built merely to wait for the next amphibious assault or regional war; they are deployed every day. Through operational experience, developed procedures, and honed training routines, the Marine Corps stands ready to respond. Our organization has evolved to handle uncertain world situations and has repeatedly demonstrated its worth. Embarked aboard amphibious ships, forward-deployed MAGTFs provide decision makers with the capabilities to:

- ☐ Move forces into crisis areas without revealing their exact destinations or intentions;
- ☐ Provide continuous presence in international waters;
- ☐ Provide immediate national response in support of humanitarian and natural disaster relief operations;
- ☐ Provide credible but non-provocative combat power over the horizon of a potential adversary, for rapid employment as the initial response to a crisis;
- ☐ Support diplomatic processes for peaceful crisis resolution before employing immediate response combat forces;
- ☐ Project measured degrees of combat power ashore, at night, and under adverse weather conditions, if required;
- ☐ Introduce additional forces sequentially into a theater of operations;
- ☐ Operate independent of established airfields, basing agreements, and overflight rights;
- ☐ Conduct combat operations ashore using inherent combat service support brought into the theater of operations;
- ☐ Enable the introduction of follow-on MAGTF or Joint and/or Combined forces by securing staging areas ashore;
- ☐ Operate in rural and urban environments or hostile nuclear, biological, and chemical situations;
- ☐ Withdraw rapidly at the conclusion of operations or remain to help restore stability to the affected areas; and
- ☐ Plan and commence execution of a mission within 6 to 48 hours of receiving a warning order.



MAGTF Composition

The Marine Corps task organizes for combat consistent with its statutory tasking to “... provide forces of combined arms, including aviation...” by forming forces into integrated, combined arms MAGTFs employed to accomplish assigned missions. MAGTFs are specifically tailored for rapid deployment by air and/or sea. MAGTFs are comprised of four elements:

- ❑ **Command Element (CE).** The CE contains the MAGTF headquarters and other units that provide intelligence, communications, and administrative support in general support of the MAGTF. As with all other elements of the MAGTF, it is task organized to provide the command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, and interoperability (C4I2) necessary for effective planning and execution of all operations.
- ❑ **Ground Combat Element (GCE).** The GCE is task organized to conduct ground operations to support the MAGTF mission. It may include infantry, artillery, reconnaissance, armor, engineer, and other forces as needed. The GCE can vary in size and composition from a light, air transportable unit such as a reinforced infantry battalion to one that is relatively heavy and mechanized, which may include one or more Marine, Army, or Allied divisions.
- ❑ **Aviation Combat Element (ACE).** The ACE conducts offensive and defensive air operations and is task organized to perform those functions of Marine aviation required to support the

MAGTF mission. It is formed around an aviation headquarters with appropriate air control agencies, combat, combat support, and combat service support units. The ACE can vary in size and composition from an aviation detachment of specifically required aircraft to one or more Marine aircraft wings (MAWs).

- ❑ **Combat Service Support Element (CSSE).** The CSSE is task organized to provide the full range of combat service support functions and capabilities necessary to support the continued readiness and sustainability of the MAGTF as a whole. It is formed around a combat service support headquarters and may vary in size and composition from a support detachment to one or more force service support groups (FSSGs).

Types of Marine Air Ground Task Forces

Four types of MAGTFs can be task organized as follows: the Marine Expeditionary Force, the Marine Expeditionary Brigade, the Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), and the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force.

Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). The MEF is the principal Marine Corps warfighting organization, particularly for a larger crisis or contingency, and is normally commanded by a Lieutenant General. A MEF can range in size from less than one to multiple divisions and aircraft wings, together with one or more FSSGs.

With 60 days of accompanying supplies, MEFs are capable of both amphibious operations and sustained operations ashore in any geographic environment. With appropriate augmentation, the MEF command element is capable of performing as a Joint Task Force (JTF) Headquarters.

MEFs are the primary “standing MAGTFs” (i.e., they exist in peacetime as well as wartime). Currently the Marine Corps is organized with three standing MEFs, each with a Marine division (MarDiv), MAW, and FSSG. The I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) is located at bases in California and Arizona. The II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) is located at bases in North Carolina and South Carolina. The III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) is forward-based in Okinawa and Mainland Japan. Marine component headquarters, COMMARFORLANT or COMMARFORPAC, may form smaller

MAGTFs from these MEFs. The Marine Corps reservoir of combat capabilities — the divisions, wings, and force service support groups — are assigned to these standing MEFs. A MEF will normally deploy in echelon and will designate its lead element as the MEF (Forward).

Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB). The MEB is the mid-sized MAGTF and is normally commanded by a Brigadier General. The MEB provides transitional capability between the forwarded deployed MEU and the MEF, our principal warfighter. The MEB is a task organized MAGTF notionally composed of a reinforced infantry regiment, a composite Marine Aircraft Group (MAG), and a Brigade Service Support Group (BSSG). The command element of the MEB is embedded within the command element of its parent MEF.

The MEB provides supported CINCs with a scalable, warfighting capability across the spectrum of military operations that is rapidly deployable and which can impact all elements of the battlespace. An expeditionary force, it is capable of rapid deployment and employment via amphibious shipping, strategic air/sealift, geographic or maritime prepositioning force assets, or any combination thereof. With 30 days of accompanying supplies, MEBs are capable of amphibious assault and sustained operations ashore in any geographic environment. A MEB can operate independently or serve as the forward echelon of a MEF.

With additional MEF CE augmentation, a MEB is capable of performing as a JTF Headquarters. Currently, the 1st, 2d and 3d MEB Command Elements are embedded within the CEs of I, II and III MEF, respectively.

Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)). Forward deployed MEU (SOC)s embarked aboard Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) shipping operate continuously in the areas of responsibility of numerous Unified Commanders. These units provide the National Command Authorities and Unified Commanders an effective means of dealing with the uncertainties of future threats by providing forward deployed units which offer unique opportunities for a variety of quick reaction, sea-based, crisis response options in either a conventional amphibious/expeditionary role or in the execution of maritime special operations. The forward deployed MEU(SOC), forged and tested in real-world contingencies, remains the benchmark forward operating Marine force. The MEU is commanded by a colonel and deploys with 15 days of accompanying supplies.

Prior to deployment, the MEU undergoes an intensive 6 month training program focusing on its conventional and selected maritime special operations missions. The training culminates with a thorough evaluation and certification as “Special Operations Capable (SOC)”.

Special Purpose MAGTF (SPMAGTF). A SPMAGTF is task organized to accomplish a specific mission, operation, or regionally focused exercise. As such, SPMAGTFs can be organized, trained, and equipped to conduct a wide variety of expeditionary operations ranging from crisis response to training exercises and peacetime missions. They are designated as SPMAGTF with a mission, location, or exercise name: e.g., “SPMAGTF (X),” “SPMAGTF Somalia,” “SPMAGTF UNITAS”, or “SPMAGTF Dade County.” Their duties cover the spectrum from non-combatant evacuation to disaster relief and humanitarian missions.



World Map Showing Location of MEFs, MPSS, & MARFORS

MAGTF Sustainability

A fundamental characteristic of a MAGTF is its ability to operate for extended periods as an expeditionary force, relying on internal resources for sustenance. All MAGTFs have inherent sustainability to be self-sufficient for

planned periods. Larger MAGTFs have a deeper, broader, and more capable organic support capability. MAGTFs deploy with a portion of their accompanying supplies sufficient for a specific period of time:

- ❑ MEF — 60 days
- ❑ MEB — 30 days
- ❑ MEU — 15 days
- ❑ SPMAGTF — As the situation requires.

MAGTFs can augment their organic sustainability by using external support from Navy organizations, wartime host nation support (WHNS) agreements, inter-service support agreements (ISSAs), and in theater cross service support.

Maritime Prepositioning Forces (MPF)

MPFs provide an added dimension in mobility, readiness, and global responsiveness. The MPF program involves 13 ships organized in three squadrons. These squadrons are strategically positioned in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. The MPF program reduces MAGTF response time from weeks to days by prepositioning the bulk of equipment and 30 days of supplies for a 17,300 MARFOR aboard specially designed ships. Personnel and selected equipment can be airlifted quickly, using roughly 250 airlift sorties, to an objective area to join with required equipment at a secure site.

As graphically demonstrated in Operation Desert Shield, MPFs are integral to the rapid deployment of credible combat power. MPF program flexibility has been increased through selective and innovative loading plans and development of enhanced deployment options.

Unique Unified Commander Support

A Combatant Commander or subordinate Joint Force Commander may also require MARFORs that do not possess all elements of a MAGTF; thus they are not given a MAGTF designation. Examples are installation security forces, engineer and medical support teams for humanitarian operations, deployments for training, law enforcement operations, and mobile training teams. In these cases, forces will be designated by the name of the senior headquarters having operational control; e.g., 1st Combat Engineer Battalion (Rein), 1st MarDiv.

Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable)

COMMARFORLANT and COMMARFORPAC maintain forward-deployed MEU(SOC)s in the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, and Pacific regions. In addition to conventional capabilities, the MEU(SOC) is augmented with selected attachments to provide enhanced capabilities. These special capabilities include:

- ☐ Close Quarters Battle;
- ☐ Specialized Demolition Operations;
- ☐ Clandestine Reconnaissance and Surveillance;
- ☐ Maritime Interdiction Operations;
- ☐ Direct Action;
- ☐ Gas and Oil Platform Operations;
- ☐ Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and/or Personnel;
- ☐ In-Extremist Hostage Recovery; and
- ☐ Clandestine Recovery Operations.

Other Special Purpose Marine Corps Forces

Air Contingency Forces. Both COMMARFOR PAC and COM-MARFORLANT maintain Air Contingency MAGTFs (ACMs) in a continuous state of readiness. ACMs are air deployable forces available to the Unified Commanders with lead elements ready to deploy within 18 hours of notification. The ACMs provide great versatility in that they can be used as part of the fly-in echelon of a MPF, as reinforcement for an amphibious force, or as the lead element of a MEF.

The ACM will be task organized to meet the mission, the threat, and airlift availability. The size of the GCE can range from a reinforced rifle company plus a battalion headquarters element, to a regimental size force consisting of a regimental headquarters, two infantry battalions, a two battery artillery battalion, a two platoon reconnaissance company, a two platoon engineer company, and appropriate aviation and combat service support elements.

Norway Prepositioning Program. Similar in concept to the MPF but land based, this program currently stores supplies and combat equipment at secure locations in Norway for an airlifted force. Forward positioning of equipment saves both reaction time and tremendous additional airlift assets.

Marine Corps Security Forces (MCSF). About 3,200 Marines support or augment Navy security forces around vital naval assets worldwide. These forces are assigned to the Chief of Naval Operations and serve as operating forces of the Marine Corps. These forces include Marine Barracks, Marine Corps Security Force Companies, two Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team (FAST) Companies which will deploy three FAST platoons in support of COMUSNAVCENT, CINC-PACFLT and COMUSNAVEUR, and a small number of cadre assigned to Navy regions to assist in training of Navy security personnel. The Marine Detachments previously assigned to aircraft carriers were disestablished in early 1998 as part as a coordinated effort to improve Naval security and force protection worldwide.

Marine Security Guard Battalion. The Marine Corps also provides forces to the Department of State for embassy security. Organized into the Marine Security Guard Battalion, these Marines are currently assigned to 123 embassies and consulates in 110 different countries. While not every American embassy or consulate has a Marine Security Guard detachment, those that do are protected by a security element that is both practical and impressive. Additionally, 36 new detachments are scheduled to open over the next 3 to 5 years.

Chemical/Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF). CBIRF is the only U.S. force currently capable of performing Counter Terrorism Consequence Management on a large scale in a Chemical and/or Biological (CB) containment environment. CBIRF provides a MAGTF or on-scene commander with a fully integrated post-incident CB response management capability. CBIRF possesses enhanced NBC detection and protection capabilities beyond those of standard military units and is capable of detecting and identifying toxic industrial materials in addition to warfare agents.

Enhanced NBC Capability Set. This set will enhance near real-time agent detection, identification, processing, and decontamination support to the MEF and MEU(SOC) Commanders' initial response to an adversary's chemical and/or biological agent employment thereby increasing the units force protection capabilities.

Reserves

In addition to active forces, force expansion is made possible by the activation of the Marine Corps Reserve, which like the active forces, consists of a combined arms force with balanced ground, aviation, and combat service support units. Organized under the Commander, Marine Forces Reserve (COMMARFORRES), units of this command are located at 190 training centers in 47 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia

Over the past several years, the Reserve Component has been closely integrated with the Active Component in our Total Force concept. The Reserves provide individuals and specific units to augment and reinforce active capabilities.



Supporting Establishment

The Marine Corps Supporting Establishment consists of those personnel, bases, and activities that support the Marine Corps operating forces. This infrastructure consists primarily of 17 major bases and stations in the United States and Japan and all personnel, equipment, and facilities required to operate them. This equates to approximately 32,000 Marines. The Supporting Establishment also includes the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, and Marine Corps Systems Command, as well as all the training activities and formal schools. Additionally, the Supporting Establishment includes those civilian activities and agencies that provide support to the MARFORs.

Marine Corps Total Force

There is a direct relationship between the size of the Marine Corps and the contribution made to our national defense. Large scale deployments, operations, and training exercises with Allies are part of our training and presence requirements in peacetime. About 23 percent of our operating forces are forward deployed during peacetime, which predicates a high deployment tempo and a corresponding CONUS rotation base. As the U.S. retains a desire to maintain stability in areas where we have significant interests, the requirement for forward deployed forces will continue.